

SUMMARY
COPY

For Public Review




"Building the Foundation for Economic Recovery"

HUD Consolidated Plan 2010-2014

Summary

**City of Rome, New York
September 21, 2009**



“The Consolidated Plan is a collaborative process whereby a community establishes a unified vision for community development actions. It offers local jurisdictions the opportunity to shape the various housing and community development programs into effective, coordinated neighborhood and community development strategies. It also creates the opportunity for strategic planning and citizen participation to take place in a comprehensive context and to reduce duplication of effort at the local level” (HUD, 2009)

Building the Foundation for Economic Recovery

The City of Rome Department of Community and Economic Development presents this 5-year Consolidated Plan as a near-term roadmap for the strategic use of CDBG funding. The plan includes our Annual Plan with Proposed Projects to be funded as part of the 2010 CDBG Program Year for which the City anticipates receiving an estimated \$1,200,000 in Entitlement and Program Income funds.

The City of Rome developed this plan in the midst of an unprecedented economic recession, the likes of which have not been witnessed since the 1930's. Now, more than ever, Rome recognizes the critical nature of CDBG funding with respect to housing, infrastructure, and economic development. We are challenged, as a community, to not only respond to the crisis - but to capitalize on this opportunity.

In concert with the United States Congress, the City of Rome has constructed a plan aimed at not only *recovery*, but the gradual re-tooling of our local economy through strategic use of Federal funding. We have drafted a plan that focuses on affordable and energy-efficient housing, modernized infrastructure, job training, and small business assistance. While accomplishing a myriad of parallel community development objectives, we believe that a plan guided by these core principles will help to stabilize our socio-economic environment - laying a solid foundation for prosperity in the new economy.

Ostensibly, CDBG cannot be all things to all people. In reality, it represents ***less than two percent (or 1/50th)*** of the City's annual budget. But what CDBG *can* do is provide a solid footing for suitable living conditions and economic opportunity for the neighborhoods and families that need it most. We can help provide an avenue for these neighborhoods and business districts to rebound through infrastructure improvements, energy efficient home rehabilitation, commercial rehabilitation, and crime prevention. CDBG also provides the wherewithal for the same families to prosper and ascend the economic ladder through job training, entrepreneur assistance, creative youth programming, and affordable housing.

City of Rome Consolidated Plan 2010-2014



In order to fully grasp the potential – and limitations – of our \$1.2M CDBG allocation, it is important to understand how we are obligated to spend the money. CDBG funding may be used for activities which include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition and/or demolition of real property for redevelopment
- Rehabilitation of residential and commercial structures
- Street reconstructions, utility improvements, sidewalk construction, and trees
- Public services, such as job training or senior programs
- Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources
- Assistance to both non-profit and profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities.

Many very visual projects that you see around town are funded by the Department of Community & Economic Development, through CDBG:

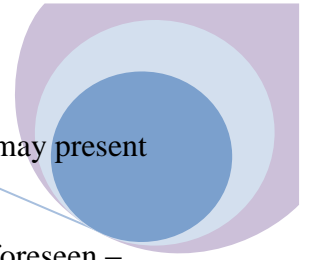
- Reconstruction of the Pinti Field Playground
- Street & utility reconstruction projects on E Thomas, N Doxtator, and Henry Streets
- Barrier free playground and tree plantings at Guyer Field
- Homeowner sidewalk assistance cost-share program
- Improvements to the Ava Dorfman and South Rome Senior Citizen Centers
- Energy efficiency and infrastructure upgrades to the Capitol Theatre
- Commercial Façade improvements like Spresso's Café, Boyz From Italy, and Salon 909, Big Daddy's, Forget-Me-Not Café, Darkroom Unlimited
- Brownfield redevelopment at the General Cable Site - now American Alloy Steel
- Housing rehabilitation projects, including emergency assistance for seniors
- Youth Construction Training Project with MVCC and the WIB
- Small Business grants to Shamrock Realty, Sidekicks Karate, and La Bella Roma, just to name a few

In an effort to expand community involvement, we recognized early on that the public hearing format and steering committee meetings were only presenting half of the picture. Public hearings and neighborhood watch meetings are sometimes difficult to attend, especially for working families. In an effort to get out into the community, we took a more modern tack. So, in addition to two public hearings, we provided citizens and agencies with a unique – and convenient - opportunity to comment from the comfort of their own homes and businesses.

To date, nearly 200 citizens, organizations, and agencies have completed online and hard-copy surveys. Throughout the development of this 5-year plan, we met with organizations and agencies and used the survey responses as a guide for setting goals and objectives.

Our chance for successful implementation of this 5-year strategy rests in the collective ability and willingness of the community to work together toward positive change. This roadmap outlines specific goals, objectives, and benchmarks that we expect to achieve over the first half of the decade. However, we fully intend for it to remain fluid as our

City of Rome Consolidated Plan 2010-2014



community weathers the storm and capitalizes on the opportunities that may present themselves in this new economy.

The City of Rome stands prepared to meet the challenges – seen *and* unforeseen – presented by this economic crisis through a series of strategic, targeted maneuvers. Through comprehensive planning and visioning, each dollar of CDBG funding will be leveraged two-fold with related grant opportunities and private investment. Since every dollar counts, we are committed to seeking out creative and productive partnerships. Our CDBG funding is just one component of a coordinated strategy to build a foundation for economic recovery.

2010-2014

Summary of Strategic Plan - Goals & Objectives

The following five goals, along with objectives to meet the goals, were developed according to priorities that were identified via a Consolidated Plan Community Survey and regular meetings with community and economic development agencies throughout the year.

For more information, or to comment on the proposed 5-year goals and objectives, please send any comments, in writing, to the Department of Community and Economic Development, 198 N. Washington Street, Rome, NY 13440. Comments can be made by e-mail to dshoemaker@romecitygov.com.

To complete the survey, you may go to the following link:

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vYVn0yexABfttQ9ftVazrA_3d_3d



Strategic Plan Summary Decent Housing

A. DECENT HOUSING (DH)

GOAL #1: *To Provide Affordable, Attractive, Energy-Efficient Housing in Marginal and Transitional Neighborhoods*

The City of Rome will work aggressively to develop a comprehensive housing strategy that makes housing affordable *and* efficient as the backbone of our neighborhood revitalization strategy which includes:

- ☐ **A restructured housing rehabilitation program** that focuses on energy efficiency and neighborhood revitalization.
- ☐ **Public-private partnerships** with affordable housing developers.
- ☐ **Strategic workforce housing initiatives** in the CDBG and Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) target neighborhoods.

GOAL #2: *To Support Agencies Assist the Homeless Population to Obtain Affordable Housing and to Prevent Homelessness.*

The City will continue to support agencies with the provision of transitional housing for families, emergency housing, and housing for the homeless as well increased awareness, access and coordination of existing assistance programs. CED staff will continue to participate as active members of the Mohawk Valley Housing Coalition – who serves as the clearinghouse and umbrella agency for services, information and education.



Strategic Plan Summary

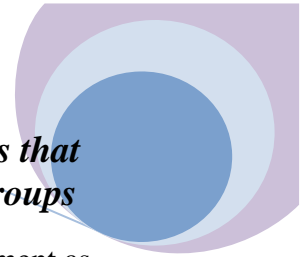
Suitable Living Environment

B. A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT (SL)

GOAL #3: *To Provide for Sustainable Reconstruction of Aging Infrastructure in Order to Lay the Groundwork for Sustained Economic Recovery*

Rome is at a crossroads. Now is the time re-constructing crumbling infrastructure for the city to remain livable, affordable, and competitive in the ever-changing economy. This will best achieved through a comprehensive approach to sustainable development projects to include:

- ☐ **Street, sidewalk, and utility reconstructions** in marginal neighborhoods and mixed commercial-residential districts in our urban core.
- ☐ **Reconstruction and improving access of aging parks** and recreational facilities in the target area.
- ☐ **Parallel development of green infrastructure** to reduce the stormwater load on our systems, mitigate gaseous and particulate pollution in our residential neighborhoods, and provide cleaner, safer streets.
- ☐ **Acquisition and/or demolition of strategic, vacant, abandoned, and blighted structures** in residential and industrial neighborhoods to eliminate health & safety hazards, promote new construction, and stabilize declining home values in our urban core.
- ☐ **Historic Preservation in Rome's urban core** is critical to neighborhood stabilization and combating blight in some of our transitional neighborhoods. The City will provide appropriate assistance to agencies and housing rehabilitation projects that seek to preserve the fabric of our historic downtown neighborhoods.



GOAL #4: *To Provide Support for Public Service Activities that Assist Youth, the Elderly and Neighborhood Groups*

Public input identified non-housing community development as priorities for the next five years. The City will work with agencies, organizations and neighborhood groups to provide enhanced youth and elderly programs as well as neighborhood beautification and crime prevention activities.



Strategic Plan Summary

Expanded Economic Development

C. EXPANDED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES (ED)

GOAL #5: *To Develop and Support Economic Development Projects to Position Our Workforce for Growth in the New Economy*

The City will adapt its economic development strategy to meet the needs of small businesses, emerging micro-enterprises, creative entrepreneurs, and main street commercial development. The strategy revolves around:

- ☐ **An expanded revolving loan and grant package** to provide competitive gap financing of creative projects that create local jobs and green products & services;
- ☐ **A continued commercial façade grant program** to encourage infill development in low-to-moderate income mixed commercial-residential neighborhoods while discouraging unsustainable urban sprawl and scattered industry;
- ☐ **Proactive development and support of public service programs** that cultivate valuable skills, green-sector employment training, expanded opportunities for underserved and disabled populations; and
- ☐ **Partnerships with educational, cultural, and vocational institutions** and agencies to train our youth in viable, marketable skills and trades.